

Home & Garden



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Dear Neighbours,

On behalf of Council and staff of the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury, it is my pleasure to bring greetings by way of this information filled Home & Garden Magazine.

Although we have experienced a lengthy and harsh winter season, we are grateful for the hint of warm weather and I am thrilled to say that spring has officially arrived. No doubt most of you join me in eagerly anticipating sunny skies and the opportunity to spend quality time in our gardens and backyards with family and friends. This year you will once again see colourful hanging baskets and barrel planters along with various municipal and facility gardens throughout our community. Maintenance of our town parks and municipal gardens for your enjoyment is a priority for our Leisure Services staff. The mill wheel on Holland Street and the Heron Fountain on Barrie Street will

again be adorned with a vibrant, colourful display of summer flowers.

To enjoy the beautiful outdoors we have a number of key events planned. The Town continues to participate in Community Clean Up Day, the Marsh Mash, the Mayor's Hike for Health, Canada Day and Carrotfest. The Town's Active Transportation Committee is committed to improving our trails system which is integrated throughout the community. I encourage you to take a walk on our trails and enjoy the beautiful sites our Town has to offer.

I wish all of our residents a wonderful spring and summer season and wish you all the best in your gardening efforts around your own homes and workplaces.

Warmest regards,

Doug White

Mayor

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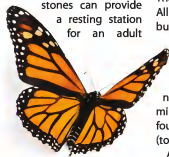
Colour *on the wing*

With proper planning, your garden can become an oasis of colour in the summer - not only filled with bright and fragrant blooms, but with colour on the wing!

It's easier than ever to plant to attract butterflies. There are numerous guides to planting a "butterfly garden", offering a choice of native species that will provide sustenance and shelter for the beautiful insects.

Adult butterflies feed only on nectar, and are attracted to flat-topped flowers, and to blossoms that are red, yellow, orange, pink or purple, blooming in full sunlight for at least part of the day.

Butterflies also need resting places - warm, flat stones can provide a resting station for an adult



butterfly - and a source of water. A puddle will do.

The big thing to avoid? The use of pesticides. All pollinators, including butterflies, are currently under attack, and the suspected culprit is neonicotinoid pesticide use - a supposedly natural pesticide that mimics the compounds found in the plant *Nicotiana* (tobacco).

Among the best plant

choices for your Butterfly Garden:

- Bee Balm (*Monarda*).
- Clove Pink (*Dianthus*)
- Cornflowers (*Centaurea*)
- Mallow (*Molva*)
- Phlox
- Purple Cone Flower (*Echinacea*)
- Sweet Alyssum (*Lobularia*)

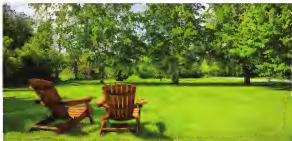
Want to attract Monarch Butterflies, and assist the survival of this magnificent butterfly? Plant milkweed (*Asclepias*) in your garden. There are five native

milkweeds to choose from - including Butterflyweed, which has beautiful orange flat-topped flowers; whorled milkweed, and swamp milkweed.

Common milkweed can also be planted in the garden; once on the banned weed list, Agriculture Canada has lifted the ban, due to the importance of the plant in the life cycle of the Monarch butterfly.

Did you know?

Watering a lawn can do more harm than good if the lawn is not watered correctly. Excessive watering is a waste of water and can cost homeowners money while harming the environment at the same time. Water that is not absorbed by the lawn can result in runoff, which causes nitrogen in the grass, any fertilizer that was applied and chemicals in the water itself to run into gutters and eventually pollute streams, rivers and oceans. Grass needs oxygen in the soil to grow properly. But when a lawn is over-watered, the oxygen between the soil particles is pushed out, depriving roots of the oxygen they need to grow in strong. This leads to



shallow root systems, which make a lawn more susceptible to stress, disease and insect infestation. Over-watering can also be unsightly, as lawns that are over-watered tend to have more weeds, robbing even the greenest of lawns of its aesthetic appeal.

Listing your home . . . *To paint or not to paint is the question*

You have decided to put your house on the market. The first question that enters your mind is, What can I do to get the most out of my home?



Painting the interior of your home is one of the best investments you can make, when selling. A fresh coat of paint tells a potential buyer that you take good care of your home. Seeing clean, fresh-looking walls and nicely cut lines along the trim - as opposed to dings, nicks and stains on a wall - do wonders for the value of your home.

Depending on the paint job, and your local real estate market, you can expect a return of 50% to 500% on your investment. Definitely worth it!

When choosing a colour for the interior, stick with neutral, lighter colours. You may be a huge fan of lime green or neon orange, but you are trying to appeal to a buyer. It's best to stay away from extremes when you are trying to sell. Colours such as beige, ivory, cream or off-white are preferred. Even if these neutral tones are not a buyers's first choice, they are colours that the buyer can live with, and make it easier for a buyer to envision their own colour schemes when looking through each room.

Lighter colours also make a home appear much brighter, and individual rooms, much larger.

So the answer is, Paint! Making sure your home is properly painted is well worth the investment.

Article courtesy of Peter Ferragine, Sales Representative, Royal LePage At Your Service Realty



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Annuals **or** Perennials

—what's the difference?

Annuals are plants that perform the entire growing season, but must be planted each and every year, as they die back completely at the end of the year.

Perennials are plants that will grow back, year after year. The top of the plant may die off at the end of the growing season, but the plant will regrow the following year from the same root base.

Perennial Gardens need to be planned out properly, to enjoy colour all year long, as perennials flower during different times of the year. When a perennial flowers, on average the blooms will last 3 to 6 weeks.

There are perennials that bloom in early spring, some in the summer, and others in the fall - so, to obtain colour all season, you must carefully plan out your garden with different varieties of perennials that bloom at different times. Unfortunately, many homeowners just don't have enough garden space to accommodate a perennial garden, especially when

some established varieties can grow to be very large.

This is where annuals stand out!

Although annuals have to be replanted every year, they provide colour the entire growing season. Perfect for small gardens, and to fill in, between perennials and

shrubs, they are also perfect for container gardening.

If you want colour all year long, annuals are the way to go. Some common annual bedding plants that you can pick up at your local garden centre include Alyssum, Begonias, Geraniums, Impatiens, Marigolds,

Petunias, Portulaca, Salvia, Verbena, Vinca, and many more! Come and explore the world of colour in your garden.

Article courtesy of Peter Ferragine, Ferragine Greenhouses



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Remember when petunias were just ordinary annuals? You'd plant small, individual plants in a pot or bed, give them plenty of sun, and hope they'd provide a colourful show through the summer.

Then came the Wave Petunia: cascades of blooms, that could fill a pot, drape the sides of a flowering basket, tumble and fall over retaining walls.

The only problem was that, by the end of the season, they tended to become scraggy, thin, and tired-looking.

Now, there are Crazytunias. The latest in Petunia-engineering combines a robust, upright form, with vivid flowers, patterns and shapes, that keep blooming all season long - like crazy!

As long as daytime temperatures are above 14 C (and night-time

temperatures above 11 C), and light levels remain high, Crazytunias should flower from April to September, in colors that will astound and amaze - from black, to vivid salmons and reds, and variegated forms.

Purchasing Crazytunias from local growers should provide the greatest hardiness, and success. See your local garden centre.

Did you know?

Landscape fabrics are used to prevent weed growth while still allowing air, oxygen and water to flow to and from the soil. Landscape fabrics are a chemical-free way to prevent weed growth, endearing them to eco-friendly homeowners. Landscape fabrics, once laid, also are a far less labor-intensive method to prevent weed growth, as they can be effective for several years, during which homeowners can expect to perform little or no maintenance. In addition, many homeowners prefer landscape fabrics because they can help the soil effectively maintain moisture during dry periods, when gardens might otherwise be highly susceptible to drought. Once put down, landscape fabric can be covered with mulch to add aesthetic appeal.

Many flowers compete with one another to attract butterflies, birds and bees for pollination, but at least two species of flowering plants have enhanced their ability to attract insects in unique ways. The titan arum (*Amorphophallus titanum*) is native to western Sumatra, where it grows in openings in rainforests. It is the largest unbranched flower in the world and can reach up to 15 feet tall. But this alone is not what makes the titan arum so special. It is unwise to step in close to get a whiff of this enormous bloom, as the plant gives off a rancid odor reminiscent of rotting meat. It is sometimes known as the carrion plant or the corpse plant for this reason. The plant has created this scent to attract flies for pollination. The rafflesia, which is native to southeastern Asia as well, is another plant that produces a rotting aroma to attract insects. The rafflesia has no stems, leaves or true roots - it's basically one large flower.



Glorious dandelions

Dandelion is likely the most abundant and most identifiable edible flower in the country.

For those people who seek to keep a lush, "weed"-less yard, dandelions are a thorn in their side. They are tough plants, and though they aren't native to North America, they've certainly made themselves at home. But whether growing up through cracks in the sidewalk or all over your lawn, dandelions offer some healthful and tasty benefits.

Dandelion use goes back centuries, when it was used in ancient Egypt and Arabia. They've been used in traditional Chinese medicine, as well as Indian Ayurvedic healing. It's believed that the plant was brought over on the Mayflower intentionally, specifically for its healing powers - though some sources say it was brought to provide food for honeybees. Once here, however, the plant spread like a "weed."

The Dandelion received its name from the shape of its leaves. Derived from the French, "dent de lion", dandelion literally means "Tooth of the lion."

Dandelion leaves or "greens" are perhaps more

nutritionally potent than the lettuce in your crisper. They contain as much iron as spinach, and four times as much Vitamin A (betacarotene) as the popular salad green. One cup of dandelion also contains 533% of the recommended daily allowance of Vitamin K, and is a good source of Vitamin C, calcium, iron, fibre and potassium.

There are many uses for dandelions, most of which involve the leaves. Historically, the leaves are most widely-recognized as a promoter of liver health, as they stimulate the production of bile and work to detoxify the blood. One study, from the University of Annunzio Chieti Pasca in Italy found that dandelion extract significantly reduces oxidative stress and inflammation in rats with liver damage. The plant is also a known diuretic, working to increase the amount of urine the body produces, and can be valuable in reducing water weight or blood pressure.

It has digestive benefits, working as a mild appetite stimulant and upset stomach soother.

Another promising study,

published in the Journal of Ethnopharmacology, indicated dandelion root tea was able to kill leukemia cells - the active compounds eliminating cancer cells while keeping healthy cells alive. Researchers called it a "novel" non-toxic anti-cancer agent.

The University of Maryland indicates some studies have shown dandelion to be an effective blood sugar regulator as well, working to reduce "bad" cholesterol while increasing "good" cholesterol.

When harvesting dandelion, make sure it hasn't been treated with weed killer or pesticides.

Always harvest when the plant is healthy and alive; if digging up roots, wait until after a rain to make the effort easier. When you cut the leaves, you will see a milky sap - this is where the medicinal properties of the leaves and root lie.

Flowers - a good source of anti-oxidants. Choose the full and bright yellow blossoms.

Leaves - used in teas,

tinctures and meals. Choose a mixture of young and older leaves.

Roots - used in liver tonics, teas and tinctures. Choose the fullest and largest root systems, on the most-developed plants.

Besides teas and tinctures, dandelion is edible. Leaves and flowers can be thrown into nearly any salad - although the leaves can be slightly bitter. Make a pesto out of the leaves - it freezes well.

Considering the versatility of the dandelion, it makes far more sense to harvest the plants than to pull them up or treat them with chemicals.



From the website,
naturalsociety.com
by Elizabeth Renter



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Neonicotinoids *blamed for bee deaths*

Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) recently released a report, that included the following statement:

"In the spring and summer of 2012, we received a significant number of pollinator mortality reports mainly from corn-growing regions of Ontario and Quebec. Areas of high corn production correlated well with the locations of bee mortalities. Approximately 70% of the affected dead bee samples tested positive for residues of neonicotinoid insecticides used to treat corn seeds, while neonicotinoids were detected in unaffected bees in one sample at very low levels. We concluded that the majority of pollinator mortalities were a result of exposure to neonicotinoid insecticides, likely through exposure to contaminated dust generated during the planting of treated corn seed."

Neonicotinoids - or "Neonics" - initially seemed to be a solution to a pesticide problem for farmers: a "natural" means of insect pest control, utilizing nicotine-like chemicals, that demonstrated less toxicity to mammals. Use of neonicotinoid insecticides, like Imidacloprid, Clothianidin and Thiamethoxam, has become widespread, especially for the pre-treatment of corn and soy seed.

In fact, in less than 20 years, the neonicotinoids have become "the most widely used class of insecticides," according to an article in Science Direct.com, accounting for 25% of



global market share.

But research has shown that the neonics have a devastating effect on some birds, aquatic invertebrates, and insect pollinators, especially bees and butterflies. While the toxic principle of neonicotinoid "dust" does break down in sunlight within 34 days, the water-soluble toxins can accumulate in both soil and water, and can be absorbed by both crops and wild plants -contaminating nectar and pollen.

Use of neonicotinoids has been linked to "bee colony collapse disorder" - high death rates in bee colonies, relating to failure to forage, and failure to either leave or return to the hive. The neonicotinoids have been shown to damage the central nervous system of bees; an Italian study also found that they may disrupt the immune system, making bees more susceptible to common viruses.

Just how significant is the loss of pollinators? It's not just the loss of honey production - the estimate is that pollinators are responsible for \$15 billion in crops in the U.S. alone, while Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada estimates that

one-third of Canadian crops depend on pollinators, with a total value of approximately \$1 billion.

The death of bee colonies and other key pollinators has been called a disaster for agriculture. It is also having a critical and devastating impact on local beekeepers, like Sharon and George Overton.

The Overtons usually produce about 55 barrels of honey at their Creekside Farm, near Beeton. Last year, they lost many of their hives; honey production was down to 12 barrels.

"If this keeps up, in two years we're out of business," said George.

"The future is bleak," agreed Sharon, noting that some beekeepers are moving away to more northerly and remote areas, far from the cornfields of southern Ontario. "You just can't keep throwing money at it."

The Overtons are firm believers that Neonicotinoid use is to blame - "The science is there," Sharon said - and Health Canada's PMRA appears to agree, concluding, "Current agricultural practices related to the use of neonicotinoid-treated corn and soybean

Beekeeper Sharon Overton has another concern: she points out that the past 20 years, which have seen a rise in neonicotinoid use, have also seen a rise in both ADHD and autism. She cites Dr. H. A. Tennekkes of the Netherlands, consultant in Toxicology and author of "The Systemic Insecticides: A Disaster in the Making," who has warned that residues of neonicotinoids in food "may have adverse effects on human health, especially on the developing brain."

seed are not sustainable."

The European Union has banned the use of Imidacloprid, Clothianidin and Thiamethoxam on corn - but that has not been recommended in Canada. Instead, PMRA is calling for better labelling, safer planting practices, and more study.

For the Ontario Beekeepers' Association, that's not enough. The OBA is arguing that the continued use of neonicotinoid pesticides "poses an unacceptable likelihood of serious, imminent harm to honey bees and native pollinators... We will be asking that these toxic chemicals be removed from use."

Discover *the thrill of the grill*

Do you fire up the grill every chance you get, or are you a barbecue dabbler? With that thick, juicy hamburger in mind, it must be your old equipment that is holding you back.

But before you buy a spanking new grill, do be aware that there are several barbecue types and each one has its unique set of benefits and features. The biggest decision you'll have to make, for example, is whether you want a charcoal, propane, natural gas, or electric grill. Weigh the benefits of each against the others and

decide which one best matches your needs. Here's a snapshot of each, from staff at the Home Depot:

Charcoal grills tend to be the most economical and have the fewest parts. They cook food at high heat to seal juices in, and many people love the smoky flavor that charcoal provides.

Propane and natural gas grills are ready to cook within minutes and can be fueled with a re-usable propane tank or natural gas line. Heat is measured in BTUs (British thermal units), with higher ratings indicating a more intense heat output.

Gas also enables more precise temperature control for cooking food evenly and consistently. Several brands, like Weber, offer both propane and gas models.

Electric grills are easy to start. As an ideal choice for small spaces, porches and



patios, they also present minimal fire risk. If you live in an apartment building or high-rise, you may be limited to a small electric unit.

Smokers and fryers provide the ability to slow cook turkey, beef, and other savory meats to enhance flavor. Fryers are filled with oil and can be used to fry, boil, and in some cases, steam foods to seal in their natural juices.

When shopping for

a grill, also consider its construction: will it stand up to harsh weather conditions and remain sturdy through years of use? Stainless steel grill construction and cast-iron grates deliver heavy-duty performance. If you plan to store your grill inside, use the lighter weight grill.

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These *animals* may help *your garden*

Planning and maintaining a garden requires a lot of effort, which can result in an aesthetically pleasing addition to the landscape. But that hard work can also fall victim to nature when local

potentially dangerous diseases.

Frogs

Frogs and toads will prey on insects and make the local insect population more manageable. Toads eat mainly slugs, who feed on the leaves and fruits of many plants. Frogs and toads are attracted to water, so including a pond or another water feature in



wildlife find a garden too mouth-watering to resist.

In an effort to rid a garden of unwanted pests, gardeners may unwittingly scare away animals and insects that might just protect the garden from more ill-intentioned animals. Not every creature that scurries is out to get prized petunias or to devour tomatoes. In fact, many can prove beneficial to gardens.

Bats

Bats have a bad reputation, as people unnecessarily fear bats because they believe them to be carriers of disease. But many bats feed off of insects or fruits and will not harm a human. The average brown bat can eat 1,000 mosquitoes in an hour, so it's easy to see why bats are good to have around. Mosquitoes are not only a nuisance but also harbor

the garden will provide them with a habitat they like.

Birds

While it is true that some birds can damage crops, many birds are content to feed on insects attracted to the garden, which helps to keep insect numbers in check. Chickadees, for example, will dine on aphid eggs, while larger birds may prey on mice or other rodents or simply scare them out of the garden. Jays and mockingbirds are known to be feisty and can even deter dogs and cats from a yard. Hummingbirds will sip on the nectar of flowers and help pollinate plants.

Snakes

Snakes in a garden can be disconcerting to some people, but snakes are ideal



predators who feed on insects and rodents several times their size. Snakes are the right size and shape to invade the burrows of pest animals.

Butterflies and bees

Butterflies and bees are responsible for pollinating the vast majority of plants. Avoid using pesticides that may diminish butterfly or bee populations. A beehive right next to a garden

may not be practical, but don't make attempts to destroy it. Consult with a professional beekeeper to see what can be done to move the beehive without destroying it.

Many animals and insects can be detrimental to the health of a garden. However, these are the "good guys" who should be welcomed to the landscape.



Keep pests away from entertaining areas

Outdoor entertaining is one of the joys of nicer weather. People routinely gather on the patio or around the pool when the weather warms up, and such recreational activities can foster companionship and reduce stress. However, if nuisance animals and insects are sharing entertaining spaces, these pests can quickly put a damper on the festivities.

While it may seem impossible to keep an outdoor entertaining area completely pest-free, there are ways to keep such unwanted intrusions manageable.

Identify common pests

Yard pests vary depending on geography, so the first step is to figure out which pests are native to your area. Mosquitoes can be found in many locales, but certain insects may be exclusive to specific regions. For example, Black flies, paper wasps and yellow jackets can also be a problem.

In addition to insects, squirrels, moles, raccoons, and other rodents may also descend on a property. Neighborhoods that abut natural ecosystems or infringe on wild animals'

habitats may see a wider array of animals encroaching on entertaining spaces. Deer, bears, coyotes, and certain bird species can present their own brands of trouble. Homeowners new to an area may have to experience a learning curve to determine which pests are common to a certain area, as well as which seasons bring which creatures.

Try natural repellents first

To minimize damage to the environment and to protect local wildlife, homeowners should exhaust natural ways to repel pests before resorting to less eco-friendly methods. Animals can be kept out of a yard with fences and other barriers, such as thorny bushes. Many pests are deterred by smells or certain structures in a lawn or garden. For example, inserting chicken wire into a garden bed may be enough to repel burrowing animals. Certain insects, such as flies and mosquitoes, find the aromas of citronella grass, basil and marigold offensive. Surrounding a property with these plants can create a natural bug repellent. Lavender and rosemary are other aromatics that may deter pests.

White blood meal and soap solutions can repel deer and other wildlife that may feed on garden plants.

Pests attracted to food can be kept at bay with frequent sweeping or hosing down of the patio. In addition,

maintain a clean grill and store trash in tightly secured receptacles.

Consider more traditional alternatives

If natural repellents do not work, you may need to rely on more traditional products to repel insects and other pests. Beetle traps lure beetles with an inviting scent before the beetle gets trapped in a bag and cannot exit. Traps for wasps and flies follow a similar premise. Bug zappers are largely viewed as an inhumane option but can be highly effective. Unfortunately, these zappers also attract and kill beneficial insects, such as bees and butterflies.

Chemical repellents also are available. Stores stock pesticides that will rid plants of damaging insects. These repellents also may be used around the patio to make the area inhospitable to insects and other pests.

Contact an exterminator

If the problem is simply too difficult to manage



on your own, then you might need to contact an exterminator, who can spray the perimeter of the home for bugs and can also be called in to safely trap and remove nuisance animals. An exterminator may also have detailed knowledge of protected species and which habitats can and cannot be disturbed.



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How to plant and rake. *without the ache*



Winter takes a toll on your garden, but spring takes a toll on the gardener. Gardening season and back pain often go hand in hand, but positioning your body correctly reduces the strain on muscles and joints. Use these tips to enjoy your garden to the fullest throughout the season:

Alternate your tasks. Switch between heavy chores such as digging and lighter, less physically demanding tasks such as planting.

Do the "scissors" when you rake. Stand with one leg forward and one leg back when you rake. Switch legs and hands every few minutes.

Kneel to plant and weed. Constant bending can put strain on your

back, neck, leg muscles and joints, so kneeling is recommended. Use kneepads or a kneeling mat (with handles) to minimize the amount of bending required, and to make kneeling more comfortable. Keep your back straight.

Change positions frequently. Make a point of changing position every 10 to 15 minutes. Move from kneeling to standing, from planting to digging.

Pace Yourself. A minimum of three brief breaks each hour is recommended. Take a few moments to move around, stretch your muscles, have a drink or simply sit and relax. Spread the work over several days - you will still achieve the same great results.

Garden like a pro: *tips for healthy gardening habits*

(NC) Developing a love of gardening can be a great way to plant the seed for a healthier lifestyle. The many benefits of a green thumb include consistent exercise, reduced stress and better mental health. In fact, a recent study conducted in Sweden found regular gardening can cut the risk of a heart attack and stroke and prolong life by as much as 30 per cent among a 60-plus age group.

For those with chronic health conditions, gardening can be an ideal low-impact exercise done at your own pace. But, before you pull on your work gloves, keep the following tips in mind:

Target the right tools: Chose lightweight tools that require less energy to maneuver and get rakes or hoes with extra-long, extendable handles to avoid excessive strain. Also, invest in a small stool or bench to cut down on the need for constant bending and kneeling.

Watch the weather: If you suffer from lung diseases like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis, watch the weather report and avoid working outside when pollen and pollutant levels are high - these can trigger a serious lung attack. Watch for signs of a lung attack, like increased coughing,

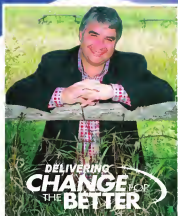


shortness of breath, wheezing, or unusual changes in phlegm. See your physician if you notice worsening symptoms, and also ask if your medication dosages need an adjustment.

Head out of the heat: Avoid gardening during the peak hours of 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., when

the sun is at its strongest and humidity at its highest. If you must be out during that period, plan to work in the shade and drink plenty of fluids. Wear a sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 30 that protects against both UVB and UVA rays.

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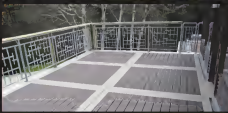
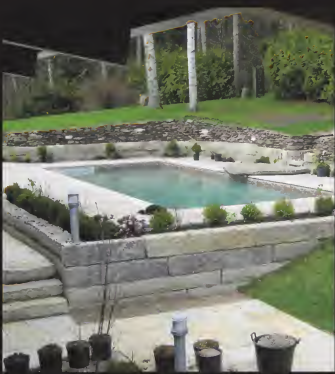
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